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United States
Department of
Agriculture

Office of
Governmental
and Public Affairs

Major News Releases and Speeches

Aug. 20 - Aug. 27, 1982

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U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Governmental and Public Affairs

CCC AUTHORIZES \$65 MILLION IN CREDIT GUARANTEES FOR MEXICO

WASHINGTON, Aug. 20—The Commodity Credit Corporation today authorized up to \$65 million in guarantees to U.S. exporters for sales of U.S. feedgrains and vegetable oil to Mexico, according to Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block.

CCC will provide up to three-year coverage for these sales under the export credit guarantee program—GSM-102.

Block said up to \$54 million in guarantees will be earmarked for sales of feed grains—barley, corn, sorghum and oats—and up to \$11 million for sales of vegetable oil—cottonseed, soybeans, peanuts and sunflowerseed.

All sales must be registered with the CCC by Sept. 30 and shipments must be made by Dec. 31. According to Mexican officials, the guarantors will be Banco Internacional, S.A., and Banco Nacional de Comercio Exterior, S.A.

The \$65 million announced today is undertaken in conjunction with a larger commitment for credit guarantees for Mexico recently agreed to by the United States. Under that larger commitment, credit guarantees of up to U.S. \$1 billion are anticipated to be extended to Mexico for purchases of agricultural commodities during U.S. fiscal year 1983. Details of those guarantees are expected to be announced in the near future.

To be eligible for guarantees, U.S. exporters must submit an application along with a guarantee fee to CCC before export is completed.

The guarantee rates include a charge to provide for a per annum interest rate coverage of up to 8 percent on the guaranteed value.

Exporters may apply for a guarantee value up to a maximum of 98 percent of the port value.

Based on semiannual repayments of principal, plus accrued interest, the fee rate is 15.60 per \$100 for 6 months; 23.40 per \$100 for 1 year; 39.30 per \$100 for 2 years; and 56.60 per \$100 for 3 years.

Based on equal annual repayment of principal, plus accrued interest, the fee rate is \$32.90 per \$100 for 1 year; 50.10 per \$100 for 2 years; and 69.20 per \$100 for 3 years.

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SOVIETS AGREE TO LTA EXTENSION

DES MOINES, Iowa, Aug. 20—Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block said today the Soviet Union has agreed to President Reagan's offer to extend the Long-Term Grains Sales Agreement for one year.

"This extension will allow American farmers to continue rebuilding this important market which was thrown away to our competitors during the partial embargo imposed on U.S. agricultural sales to the Soviet Union in January, 1980," Block said. "The willingness of the Soviet Union to accept this extension is proof that they believe the president's pledge that the U.S. will again be a reliable supplier."

Block said the acceptance was delivered in writing to the American Embassy in Moscow today. It is the second extension to the original five-year agreement negotiated in 1975. It provides that the Soviet Union must purchase six million metric tons of grain, plus they can purchase up to eight million metric tons without consultations with the U.S. During the current year, U.S. has offered an additional 15 million metric tons to the Soviet Union.

"In keeping with the president's wishes, I will be contacting the Soviet Union immediately to determine a date for discussing additional grain sales during this second extension," Block said.

#

USDA ANNOUNCES CHANGES IN FARM STORAGE FACILITY LOAN PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, Aug. 20—The U.S. Department of Agriculture has changed its farm storage facility loan program, to increase the number of farmers eligible for storage loans, Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block said today.

Block said the changes will enable the USDA to lend farmers money to build facilities to store up to two years' production of eligible crops. These facilities will be in addition to any present on-farm facilities being used to store grain held in the grain reserve program. Previously, farmers were limited to borrowing to build storage for one year's crop, including storage used for the reserve program.

Block said only farmers who participated in USDA's acreage reduction programs would be eligible for the program.

New loans will be limited to a maximum of \$25,000, but on a case-by-case basis, farmers who have reserve grain stored on their farm and who have outstanding storage facility loans will be allowed to carry an aggregate loan balance of up to \$50,000, Block said. For example, if a farmer had a \$30,000 outstanding farm facility loan, the maximum he or she could borrow with a new loan is \$20,000.

Block said that another change provides that soybean production can be counted in determining storage needs under the program, provided there is a crop on the farm that is eligible for the reserve program.

"We decided to make these program changes after reviewing the current storage situation and prospects for record feed grain and soybean crops. Farmers face a severe storage problem this year," Block said. "These changes will help producers use the facility loan program ahead of harvest and will allow them to market their crops in a more orderly fashion."

Farmer-elected county Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation committees will have the authority to limit the loan commitment period to assure farmers intend to erect the new facility in the near future, Block said.

Last month, USDA announced it would resume approval of new applications for farm storage facility loans, up to a total of \$40 million. With the exceptions of the changes announced today, all other provisions of that program will remain the same, Block said.

#

UTAH BECOMES 11TH STATE RATED FREE OF CATTLE BRUCELLOSIS

WASHINGTON, Aug. 23—Utah is the 11th state to become free of brucellosis under a new system of classifying states by the percentage of infected cattle herds, a U. S. Department of Agriculture official said today.

John K. Atwell, deputy administrator for veterinary services of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, said the "free" rating means Utah has had no known brucellosis infection for 12 months, as of Aug. 18.

The other 10 states so rated are. Alaska, Connecticut, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, New Hampshire, New York, North Dakota and Rhode Island. The U.S. Virgin Islands also are "free."

"Properly identified breeding cattle from these states don't have to be blood tested for shipment within or out of state," said Atwell. "For out-of-state shipments, however, USDA veterinarians recommend a voluntary test 45 to 120 days after arrival because of possible exposure en route."

Of the remaining 39 states, 26 have herd infection rates that are 0.25 percent or less—"class A. Nine states and portions of two, with herd infection rates of 1.5 percent or less, are rated "class B. Two entire states and portions of two others are "class C"—meaning more than 15 herds per thousand are affected by brucellosis.

"Shipping breeding cattle within or from states below the "free" rating calls for increasingly stringent testing requirements," Atwell said.

"In all classes of states, some cattle from non-quarantined herds are always free to move without prior tests," Atwell said. These include: cattle from certified-free herds; all cattle under 18 months of age; vaccinated beef cattle under 24 months of age—if not pregnant or have not calved; vaccinated dairy cattle under 20 months of age; cattle shipped directly to slaughter; and neutered cattle—steers and spayed heifers.

Steers and spayed heifers may move without tests, even from quarantined herds, because they are rarely affected by brucellosis and cannot spread it.

Brucellosis, or Bang's disease, is a bacterial disease of cattle and other animals which can be transmitted to humans. The disease attacks

the animal's reproductive system, causing abortions and breeding problems that result in reduced calf crops and lower milk yields. Infected animals must be slaughtered because there is no treatment for the disease.

In humans, brucellosis—sometimes called undulant fever—is mainly an occupational disease of livestock handlers and slaughter plant workers. It can also be caused by drinking unpasteurized milk.

#

USDA TO POLL DAIRY FARMERS ON AMENDMENTS TO 14 MILK ORDERS

WASHINGTON, Aug. 23—The U.S Department of Agriculture will poll dairy farmers who supply milk under 14 federal milk marketing orders to determine if they approve a USDA decision that would provide for earlier announcements of monthly Class II milk prices under the orders.

Edward T. Coughlin, dairy official with USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the new announcement procedure is based on the record of a public hearing held in February at Denver, Colo.

Under the administrative procedures to change the provisions of a milk marketing order, USDA first holds a public hearing, then proposes a "recommended decision. After receiving comments, USDA issues a "final decision," which cannot become effective unless it is approved by two-thirds of the dairy farmers affected by it, Coughlin said.

He said USDA will poll dairy farmers in 13 of the orders through their cooperative associations but the market administrator will individually poll those under the Eastern Ohio-Western Pennsylvania order.

Coughlin said the change is similar to one approved by dairy farmers in September 1981 for 29 other milk marketing orders. Milk processors and dairy farmers, he said, want to know earlier than they have in the past the price milk handlers will pay for milk used to make Class II products, such as cottage cheese.

The 14 orders affected this time are: Upper Florida, Tampa Bay, Southeastern Florida, Ohio Valley, Eastern Ohio-Western Pennsylvania,

Southern Michigan, Oregon-Washington, Puget Sound, Inland Empire, Eastern Colorado, Western Colorado, Southwestern Idaho-Eastern Oregon, Great Basin and Lake Mead.

The final decision provides that milk handlers be notified of Class II prices by the 15th day of the prior month. This would give processors a preliminary cost of the milk to be used for those Class II dairy products during the month of manufacture.

"Handlers would then learn the final price no later than the fifth day after the month in which the milk was processed and under the proposal this final price could not be less than the Class III prices, or in some cases the basic formula price for that same month," Coughlin said.

The previous action in the 29 milk orders, following a public hearing and approval of the changes by the affected dairy farmers, was forced by an order of the U.S. Court of Appeal in the District of Columbia.

Acting on a suit bought by a group of handlers, the court ruled that the existing way of announcing prices was invalid. The new proceeding is not subject to the court order, Coughlin said.

The final decision will be published in the Aug. 25 Federal Register. Copies are available from the market administrators for the orders or from: Dairy Division, AMS, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250.

#

USDA PROPOSES TO SIMPLIFY APPEALS OF FOREST MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

WASHINGTON, Aug. 20—The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service proposed changes today which would simplify the process for appealing Forest Service management decisions.

Forest Service Chief R. Max Peterson said the changes would correct ambiguities in the present appeal process, streamline procedures and make the regulations easier to read and understand.

The proposals are the result of a comprehensive review of existing appeal policies and procedures and suggestions for improving them, which have been made by Forest Service officials, appellants and other individuals and organizations, Peterson said.

About 500 appeal requests are made to the Forest Service each year. If the proposed rule changes are adopted, they will affect only new appeal requests. The current rules will remain in effect for cases filed between June 28, 1977, and the effective date of the revised rules.

The proposed changes were published in the Federal Register of Aug. 20. Comments on the proposal should be sent to: Forest Service, USDA, Rm. 1004-S, P.O. Box 2417, Washington, D.C. 20013, before Oct. 18.

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AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM MEETING SCHEDULED FOR HARRISBURG, PA., AUG. 31

WASHINGTON, Aug. 24—Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block has invited farm and education leaders from 12 Northeastern states to an Aug. 31 meeting in Harrisburg, Pa.

This will be the second in a series of regional "Agriculture in the Classroom" meetings.

"This program is a cooperative effort by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, farm organizations and educators throughout the country to help students understand where their food and fiber come from and the role of agriculture in the economy and society," Block said.

"Young people need to understand where their food comes from and how the agricultural sector works if they are to shape policy intelligently in the years to come," Block said. "This program will be a valuable tool in meeting that need."

The meeting, which is open to the public, will be held at the Harristown Building, 333 Market St., from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The 12 states are: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont.

People on the program will share ideas that have already proven successful in bringing the story of agriculture to the classroom, Block said.

In Maryland, for example, the state Department of Education, Farm Bureau and state university developed a 4th grade "Agriculture in

Maryland" package which is being used across the state, he said. In Pennsylvania, vocational agriculture teachers are offering "consumer agriculture" courses to help non-vocational agriculture students understand more about farming, agri-business and issues facing agriculture and consumers.

Those interested in attending should contact the state department of education at (717) 783-8460.

Over 100 agriculture and education leaders from 12 Midwestern states attended the first regional meeting in Lincoln, Neb., Aug. 3.

#

OZONE LAYER IN LESS PERIL FROM FERTILIZERS THAN HAD BEEN THOUGHT

WASHINGTON, Aug. 23—Earth's ozone layer, which screens out certain sun rays causing skin cancer, is in far less danger from farm fertilizers than had been believed, scientists at the U.S. Department of Agriculture said today.

For years, some scientists had estimated that 30 percent of the nitrogen fertilizers farmers put on crops escape into the air as nitrous oxide and damage the ozone layer about 20 miles above the surface. In the stratosphere, nitrous oxide breaks down to nitric acid which can react with ozone.

Now, five years of research show that less than two percent of nitrogen fertilizers applied to crops escapes from the fields as nitrous oxide, said research chemist Arvin R. Mosier and soil scientist Gordon L. Hutchinson of USDA's Agricultural Research Service.

They said the earlier high estimates were based on inadequate data. These new findings come as good news because of fears that the increased use of nitrogen fertilizers during the past few decades and projected increases in the future would pose a serious threat to the ozone layer.

This layer filters out much of the sun's harmful ultraviolet radiation which, in excess, can increase the incidence of skin cancer.

Mosier and Hutchinson found that nitrous oxide emissions varied depending on such factors as kind of fertilizer, soil type, temperature

and amount of water present. These factors interact to produce varying amounts of nitrous oxide, but emissions the scientists measured were always between 0.4 and 1.5 percent of the nitrogen fertilizer applied.

At Fort Collins, Colo., Mosier and Rutchinson measured emissions from corn, barley, alfalfa and sugarbeet fields after they had applied 50, 100 or 200 pounds of nitrogen fertilizer per acre.

For comparison, the researchers measured the amount of nitrous oxide coming off virgin, native shortgrass rangelands.

"Our research showed that croplands produce more nitrous oxide than a similar area of native rangeland; but since only one-tenth of the Earth's land surface is cultivated, the total contribution from uncultivated lands probably exceeds that from croplands," said Hutchinson.

"Given the fact that native rangelands probably have contributed the same amount of nitrous oxide for many millions of years, we probably are justified in lessening our concern about the ozone layer," said Mosier.

It had been thought for many years that native grasslands and forests contributed little, if any, nitrous oxide to the atmosphere because they were not fertilized. The nitrogen sources for plant and tree growth in such ecosystems is from dissolved ammonia in rain and snow, nitrate adhering to dust particles, dinitrogen fixation, or nitrogen released from soil organic matter.

USDA scientists have calculated that about 10 percent of the nitrogen that accumulates from precipitation or dust on shortgrass rangelands is lost back to the atmosphere as nitrous oxide, mainly through the activity of soil-borne microorganisms.

Other scientists have now begun to report similar emissions from several cropped and native mineral soils throughout the United States and Canada. Their research also shows that native forested areas produce about the same level of nitrous oxide as native rangelands.

Larger amounts of nitrous oxide emissions have been found only in organic soils and vegetable crops that are heavily fertilized and irrigated. These atypical sites represent only a small fraction of the world's cultivated land area.

To collect meaningful data, Mosier and Butchinson had to develop new techniques. One involved the development of a reliable soil cover to collect gases. This technique is inexpensive, quick and simple to use, portable, adaptable to a wide variety of field situations and avoids many of the pitfalls of other collecting designs.

The cover looks much like an upside-down water pail with a hole to equalize air pressure inside and outside the cover. This design allows more accurate measurements of the rate at which gases accumulate under the cover.

Many previous studies of gaseous movement in and out of soils have been based on soil covers that fail to account for errors caused by the covers themselves affecting air pressure.

Mosier and Hutchinson, along with research ecologist William J. Parton and range science professor Robert G. Woodmansee, Colorado State University, are continuing these studies to include grazed pasture lands.

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WILMER D. MIZELL, SR., SWORN IN AS ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

WASHINGTON, Aug. 23—Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block today swore in Wilmer D. Mizell, Sr., as assistant secretary of agriculture for governmental and public affairs. He was confirmed by the U.S. Senate Aug. 18.

Mizell, a former major league baseball pitcher and three-term congressman, has been a public relations representative for the Southern Tool Manufacturing Company, Inc., Winston-Salem, N.C., since 1977.

In his new position, Mizell will be in charge of congressional affairs, public affairs and intergovernmental relations for USDA.

Mizell got his nickname, "Vinegar Bend," from his home town of Vinegar Bend, Ala. He was born in Leakesville, Miss., and graduated from high school there.

In 1949, he began his professional baseball career in Albany, Ga. He joined the St. Louis Cardinals in 1952, leaving them in 1960 to join the

Pittsburgh Pirates, where his 13-5 pitching record that year helped the team win the World's Championship. He retired from the New York Mets in 1962.

From 1963 to 1968, he worked for the Pepsi-Cola Bottlers of Winston-Salem, N.C., in sales management and public relations.

He was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from the Fifth District of North Carolina in 1968, an office he held until 1974. He served on the House Committee on Public Works; the House Committee on Agriculture; the House Subcommittees on Family Farms and Rural Development; Dairy and Poultry; Oil Seeds and Rice; and Tobacco.

Mizell was an assistant secretary of commerce from 1975 to 1977.

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USDA ANNOUNCES FUNDING FOR FOOD STAMP JOB SEARCH CONTRACTS

WASHINGTON, Aug. 23—Department of Agriculture is seeking contract proposals from state welfare departments to find jobs for food stamp work registrants. Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Mary C. Jarratt said \$30 million is available for the job search contracts.

This aspect of food stamp operations had previously been done by the U.S. Department of Labor. However, USDA plans to transfer the responsibility to state welfare agencies which are assigned by law to administer the food stamp program. The change is intended to give states greater flexibility and control over food stamp operations.

As a condition of eligibility for food stamp benefits, able-bodied recipients between 18 and 60 years old are required to register for work and actively seek employment.

"We're committed to helping employable food stamp recipients find suitable jobs. State welfare agencies, with a thorough knowledge of their clientele, are in the best position to carry out this responsibility effectively," Jarratt said.

To determine the amount of funds states may receive, USDA is using a formula derived from the number of food stamp work registrants in each state. State welfare agencies may perform job search

services themselves or may contract with state employment security agencies, other state and local agencies or private employment agencies.

Contract proposals must be submitted to USDA's Food and Nutrition Service by September 13.

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LOWER FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLE PRICES LIMIT FOOD CPI RISE IN JULY

WASHINGTON, Aug. 24—The July consumer price index released today indicates food prices rose 0.2 percent in July, before seasonal adjustment, according to Assistant Secretary of Agriculture William Leshner.

"This brought retail food prices in July to a level 4.5 percent higher than a year earlier, and compares with a 6.9 percent rise in prices for nonfood items over the past year," he said. Prices for food bought in grocery stores were up 0.1 percent in July, while prices for food purchased away from home were up 0.6 percent.

Leshner said retail prices for fresh fruits and vegetables were important factors in holding down the July food CPI rise, in contrast to upward pressure in the last two months. Fresh fruit prices were down 2.5 percent as increased supplies of bananas and many noncitrus fruits offset declining supplies of apples and oranges. Retail fresh vegetable prices fell 5.0 percent in July as increased production of lettuce, tomatoes and many other summer vegetables offset seasonally lower potato supplies.

Lower hog slaughter in July pushed retail pork prices up sharply for the third consecutive month. The CPI for other meats, which represents prices for processed meats, rose 1.3 percent as higher farm-level livestock prices in recent months were passed through to retail.

Poultry prices also rose in July (1.1 percent), but increased cattle slaughter pushed beef prices down 0.5 percent, reversing a 5-month upward trend. Retail egg prices rose 6.8 percent in July due to a reduced egg producing flock and declining production. Dairy product prices rose 0.5 percent, offsetting declines in the previous two months.

Retail food prices this year are expected to average about 5 percent higher than last year, the lowest annual increase since 1976. Important moderating factors this year include both a small rise in the farm value of food and a slowing of food marketing cost increases.

The farm value of foods is expected to average near 3 percent above last year's level, the third consecutive year of relatively small increases. The farm-to-retail price spread will be up 4 to 5 percent this year, the smallest annual rise since 1977.

Retail prices for imported foods and fish will rise about 4 percent this year. Retail food prices next year will continue to reflect events in the general economy. Similar to 1982, the lower overall inflation rate will continue to hold down food marketing cost rises, thereby having a major moderating effect on 1983 food prices.

July Retail Food Prices, Percent Change for Selected Items

| Items | June to July | | July 1981 to July 1982 |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| | Not seasonally adjusted | Seasonally adjusted | |
| | <i>Percent change</i> | | |
| All food | 0.2 | -0.1 | 4.5 |
| Food away from home | 0.6 | 0.6 | 5.2 |
| Food at home | 0.1 | -0.4 | 4.1 |
| Meats | 0.6 | 0.4 | 7.4 |
| Beef and veal | -0.5 | -0.5 | 4.4 |
| Pork | 2.3 | 0.9 | 14.6 |
| Other meats | 1.3 | 0.4 | 5.3 |
| Poultry | 1.1 | -2.2 | -2.5 |
| Eggs | 6.8 | 3.7 | -0.3 |
| Fish and seafood | 1.4 | 1.5 | 3.7 |
| Dairy products | 0.5 | * | 1.4 |
| Fats and oils | -0.5 | * | -3.6 |
| Cereals and bakery products | 0.2 | * | 4.4 |
| Fruits and vegetables | -1.9 | -2.8 | 5.4 |

July Retail Food Prices, Percent Change for Selected Items—
Continued

| Items | June to July | | July 1981 to July 1982 |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| | Not seasonally adjusted | Seasonally adjusted | |
| | <i>Percent change</i> | | |
| Nonalcoholic beverages | -0.5 | -0.5 | 3.0 |
| Sugar and sweets | 0.7 | * | 2.6 |
| Other prepared foods | 0.1 | 0.2 | 4.6 |

* A seasonally adjusted index is not available for these items.

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INTERAGENCY GROUP FOCUSES ON GRAIN
ELEVATOR SAFETY

WASHINGTON, Aug. 25—A new interagency group at the U.S. Department of Agriculture will focus on grain elevator safety, Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block announced today.

Block established the group—called the Grain Storage, Handling and Processing Safety Coordinating Subcommittee—to function under the administration committee of his coordination council.

"I am giving this subcommittee the mission to promote safety in grain handling facilities in harmony with the efficient movement of the nation's grain to domestic and foreign markets," Block said.

The subcommittee will direct the USDA's research, monitoring and educational resources towards developing and providing national leadership in cooperation with private, state and federal entities. These include the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, which has primary statutory responsibility for safety in grain elevators and mills.

Chaired by Kenneth A. Gilles, administrator of the Federal Grain Inspection Service, the subcommittee will be comprised of the chief administrative officers of the Agricultural Research Service, the

Extension Service, the Agricultural Marketing Service and the National Agricultural Library.

Joseph M. Cindrich, USDA specialist in grain handling safety, will serve as executive secretary of the subcommittee.

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STRONGER DOMESTIC SUGAR PRICES TRIGGER IMPORT FEE REDUCTION

WASHINGTON, Aug. 25—Sugar import fees will be reduced one cent per pound effective Aug. 28, Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block announced today. The new fees will be 0.4193 cents per pound for raw sugar and 1.4193 cents for refined sugar.

Block said the changes in fees, which reflect stronger U.S. sugar prices, were triggered by the terms of a presidential proclamation that provides for a flexible import fee system responsive to changes in domestic sugar prices. Whenever the domestic spot price for raw sugar, as quoted by the Coffee, Sugar and Cocoa Exchange in New York, exceeds the market stabilization price by more than one cent for ten consecutive market days, the import fee must be lowered by one cent.

The average domestic spot price during the Aug. 11-24 base period was 22.383 cents per pound. This compares with the market stabilization price, established under the support program for the crop year ending Sept. 30, of 19.88 cents per pound, raw value.

"This is further evidence that the measures taken by President Reagan last spring were the right answers for both sugar producers and consumers," Block said. "Getting supplies in line with demand has produced a healthy price situation in which producers get a decent return while prices to consumers and food processors stay within a reasonable range."

On May 5, President Reagan imposed import quotas on sugar. At that time, the U.S. market was being flooded with foreign sugar, much of it subsidized by foreign treasuries, Block said. These subsidies caused excessive world supplies which in turn caused weak world prices, he said. This undercut domestic prices and threatened to force massive government expenditures under the support program, he said.

As the quota controls have brought imports down to actual requirements, internal prices have strengthened, Block said. This has enabled a gradual reduction in the import fees. The current change is the third adjustment during the July-September quarter.

World production is continuing to exceed market demand, Block said. "World prices remain very weak and the outlook is not encouraging," he said. "Consequently, we will continue to manage our own market, to maintain prices at a reasonable level so that our producers do not have to compete with foreign treasuries."

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USDA INVITES COMMENTS ON FLORAL PROPOSAL

WASHINGTON, Aug. 25—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today asked for public comments on an industry proposal that would establish a national research and promotion program for flowers and plants.

The proposed program, submitted by USDA by the Floraboard Development Committee, is intended to carry out the provisions of the Floral Research and Consumer Information Act enacted last December. The program would be financed by an assessment against producers and importers of certain flowers and plants.

Flower and plant producers, importers and the public may comment on the proposal until Sept. 24.

Charles Brader, a marketing official with USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said anyone may suggest changes in the proposal or submit alternative proposals.

If approved, the order would provide for a nationally coordinated research and promotion program financed by an assessment on certain flowers and plants. A producer or importer who did not wish to support the program could obtain a refund upon written request, Brader said. Contracts for research and promotion would be made by the floraboard after approval of the secretary of agriculture.

All producers and importers whose total annual sales of cut flowers, potted flowering plants and foliage plants exceed \$100,000 would be included under the proposed order. The committee, which would work

with USDA in administering the program, would consist of 75 voting members representing flower and plant producers and importers. The secretary of agriculture would select the members from nominations made by producers and importers.

Based on the nature of the comments received by Sept. 24, USDA eventually may hold a public hearing on the proposed order. USDA would follow the hearing with a recommended decision, then a final decision after public comments and exceptions were considered.

To become effective, the order would have to be approved by two-thirds of the affected growers and importers voting by number or value represented.

Copies of the proposed order may be obtained from Charles W. Porter, Vegetable Branch, Fruit & Vegetable Division, AMS, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250; phone (202) 447-2615.

Research and promotion orders are currently in effect for cotton, eggs, wheat, wool and potatoes, Brader said. Each program was designed and initiated by the affected industry to promote or improve marketing opportunities.

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BLOCK CALLS "ROUNDTABLE" ON FARM CHALLENGES

WASHINGTON, Aug. 25—Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block announced today that he is holding the second "agriculture roundtable" with the executives of 16 farm commodity organizations on Block Farms in Knox County, Ill., Aug. 26-27.

"These are unusual times in agriculture, and they call for unusual initiative and creative solutions," Block said. "I don't know of a better way to tackle our farm problems and challenges than to get together with the commodity leaders, elected by farmers themselves, who will throw ideas on the table, build on each other's suggestions and raise questions in a constructive and thoughtful atmosphere.

"We won't unearth all the solutions at this two-day roundtable," Block said, "but the farm leaders can go away from the setting and refine the ideas and discuss them with the farmers in their

organizations. My door will be open for these leaders to come back later. Together, we will succeed in building better marketing and management strategies and programs that will help all farmers."

The farm commodity groups and their representatives are:

American Soybean Association, B.B. Spratling, Jr., and Ken Bader; Catfish Farmers of America, Lester Myers and Seymour Johnson; Grain Sorghum Producers Association, Elbert Harp; Hawaiian Sugar Planters Association, Eiler Ravenholt; National Association of Wheat Growers, Jim Bellington and Fred Kreps;

National Broiler Council, Joe Hatfield and George Watts; National Cattlemens Association, Sam Washburn and W.T. Berry, Jr.; National Corn Growers Association, Jack Parsons and John Stevenson; National Cotton Council, Ed Breihan and Earl Sears; National Milk Producers Federation, Tom Camerlow and Francis Gregerson;

National Peanut Growers Group, Emmett Reynolds and Norfleet Sugg; National Turkey Federation, Chuck Morgan and Pete Hermanson; National Pork Producers Council, John Saunders and Orville Sweet; National Sunflower Association, Marvin Klevberg and Don Zimbleman; National Wool Growers Association, Don Meike and Marvin Cronberg; and U.S. Sugar Beet Association, David Carter.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture will also be represented by Under Secretary Seeley G. Lodwick, Assistant Secretary Wilmer D. Mizell and Assistant Deputy Secretary Richard Douglas. The White House representative will be Burleigh Leonard of the office of policy development. John Baize will coordinate the roundtable.

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PRELIMINARY SUMMARY OF FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM RESULTS FOR JUNE 1982

WASHINGTON, Aug. 26—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today released preliminary estimates of participation in the federal-state food assistance programs for the month of June with comparisons to the previous month and to the same month of last year. They are:

| | June 1981 | May 1982 | June 1982 |
|---|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| Food Stamp Program | | | |
| People participating this month (millions): | 22.5 | 22.2 | 22.2 |
| Value of bonus coupons (millions): | \$933.5 | \$862.2 | \$866.3 |
| Average bonus per person: | \$41.47 | \$38.86 | \$38.94 |
| Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations | | | |
| Number of projects in operation: | 77 | 77 | 77 |
| People participating this month (thousands): | 77.8 | 83.9 | 84.0 |
| Special Supplemental Food Program (WIC) | | | |
| People participating this month (millions): | 1.980 | 2.235 | 2.309 |
| Federal food costs (millions) ^a : | \$55.6 | \$69.8 | \$70.9 |
| Commodity Supplemental Food Program | | | |
| Number of projects in operation: | 21 | 25 | 25 |
| People participating this month (thousands): | 116.0 | 127.0 | 126.5 |
| National School Lunch Program | | | |
| Number of schools taking part ^b : | 92,914 | 91,220 | 91,220 |
| Children participating this month (millions): | 10.4 | 22.8 | 9.5 |
| Children reached with free or reduced-priced lunches this month (millions): | 5.8 | 11.4 | 5.5 |
| Percentage of lunches served free: | 50.5 | 42.5 | 50.4 |
| Percentage of lunches served at reduced price: | 7.2 | 7.0 | 7.0 |
| School Breakfast Program | | | |
| Number of schools taking part ^b : | 35,082 | 34,396 | 34,396 |
| Children participating this month (millions): | 1.7 | 3.3 | 1.5 |
| Percentage of breakfasts served free or at reduced price: | 91.0 | 88.9 | 95.3 |

| | June 1981 | May 1982 | June 1982 |
|---|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| Child Care Food Program | | | |
| Number of outlets taking part: | 60,100 | 72,100 | 68,700 |
| Children participating this month (thousands): | 696.0 | 890.0 | 763.0 |
| Summer Food Program for Children | | | |
| Number of outlets taking part | 14,500 | Nil | 13,600 |
| Participation (millions) | 1.2 | Nil | 1.1 |

^aDue to monthly fluctuations, the federal administrative expenditures are excluded from this program.

^bThese data are now collected annually in October.

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USDA RELEASES COST OF FOOD AT HOME FOR JULY, 1982

WASHINGTON, Aug. 26—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today released its monthly update of the weekly cost of food at home for July, 1982.

USDA's Human Nutrition Information Service computes the cost of food at home for four food plans—thrifty, low-cost, moderate-cost and liberal.

Esther Winterfeldt, administrator of the Human Nutrition Information Service, said the plans consist of foods that provide well-balanced meals and snacks for a week.

USDA assumes all food is bought at the store and prepared at home. Costs do not include alcoholic beverages, pet food, soap, cigarettes, paper goods and other nonfood items bought at the store.

"USDA costs are only guides to spending," Winterfeldt said.

"Families may spend more or less, depending on such factors as where they buy their food, how carefully they plan and buy, whether some food is produced at home, what foods the family likes and how much food is prepared at home.

"Most families will find the moderate-cost or low-cost plan suitable," she said. "The thrifty plan, which USDA uses to set the coupon

allotment in the food stamp program, is for families with less money for food. Families with unlimited resources might use the liberal plan."

Details of the four food plans are described in Home and Garden Bulletin No. 94, "Family Food Budgeting. . .for Good Meals and Good Nutrition," which may be purchased for \$2.50 each from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

Cost of Food at Home for a Week in July 1982

| | Plans | | | |
|---|---------|----------|---------------|-----------------|
| | Thrifty | Low-cost | Moderate-cost | Liberal Liberal |
| Families: | | | | |
| Family of 2 (20-54 years) | \$34.50 | \$44.80 | \$56.10 | \$67.10 |
| Family of 2 (55 years and over) | 31.00 | 39.90 | 49.50 | 59.00 |
| Family of 4 with preschool children | 48.90 | 62.70 | 78.20 | 93.50 |
| Family of 4 with elementary school children | 59.00 | 75.80 | 95.00 | 113.60 |
| Individuals in four-person families: | | | | |
| Children: | | | | |
| 1-2 years | 7.90 | 10.00 | 12.40 | 14.70 |
| 3-5 years | 9.60 | 12.00 | 14.80 | 17.80 |
| 6-8 years | 12.20 | 15.60 | 19.50 | 23.30 |
| 9-11 years | 15.40 | 19.50 | 24.50 | 29.30 |
| Females: | | | | |
| 12-19 years | 14.50 | 18.50 | 22.90 | 27.30 |
| 20-54 years | 14.10 | 18.20 | 22.60 | 26.90 |
| 55 and over | 12.80 | 16.40 | 20.30 | 24.00 |
| Males: | | | | |
| 12-14 years | 16.40 | 20.70 | 25.90 | 30.90 |
| 15-19 years | 18.00 | 22.90 | 28.60 | 34.40 |
| 20-54 years | 17.30 | 22.50 | 28.40 | 34.10 |
| 55 and over | 15.40 | 19.90 | 24.70 | 29.60 |

To estimate your family food costs

— For members eating all meals at home—or carried from home—use the amounts shown.

— For members eating some meals out, deduct 5 percent from the amount shown for each meal not eaten at home. Thus, for a person eating lunch out five days a week, subtract 25 percent, or one-fourth the cost shown.

— For guests, add 5 percent of the amount shown for the proper age group for each meal.

Costs in the second part of the chart are for individuals in four-person families. If your family has more or less than four, total the "individual" figures and make these adjustments, because larger families tend to buy and use food more economically than smaller ones:

— For a one-person family, add 20 percent.

— For a two-person family, add 10 percent.

— For a three-person family, add 5 percent.

— For a family of five or six persons, subtract 5 percent.

— For a family of seven or more, subtract 10 percent.

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USDA ANNOUNCES EMERGENCY MEASURES FOR GRAIN STORAGE

KNOXVILLE, Ill., Aug. 26—Emergency measures to help alleviate a potential shortage of grain storage space were announced today by Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block.

"Bumper crops of grain this year, added to last year's carryover stocks, will very likely create a shortage of both on-farm and commercial storage space in some locations of the country unless some alternatives are initiated," Block said. "These emergency actions should help ease the burden of what could have been a critical situation in certain areas."

The emergency measures include easing requirements on types of storage space. From harvest through March 1, warehousemen approved under the Uniform Grain Storage Agreement or licensed under the

U.S. Warehouse Act can submit proposals to store Commodity Credit Corporation owned grain in non-approved storage space. USDA will review the proposals on an individual basis. Warehousemen will remain responsible for quantity and quality.

Storage in non-approved space will be at the warehouseman's discretion, depending upon his storage situation. In states requiring state warehouse licensing, the warehousemen must obtain approval of the state licensing authority prior to using non-approved storage space.

The CCC will also consider offers of extended storage space for a period of two years, provided the space offered is new or renovated. CCC has already approved contracts for about 70 million bushels of new space, and offers for more will be considered.

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